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STATE PASS TO DEPT OF INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, ATTN: STEVE MORRIS AND JONATHAN PUTNAM

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [AORC](#) [SCULUNESCO](#)  
SUBJECT: WORLD HERITAGE BUDGET MEETING

¶1. (U) Summary. In conjunction with meetings on the Future of the World Heritage (WH) Convention and on the WH emblem (septels), UNESCO convened an experts meeting on the WH budget on February 24. Discussion consisted largely of a review of familiar ideas with little progress made. WH Chair Ambassador Maria San Segundo of Spain proposed creation of a budget working group modeled on the existing working group on the WH emblem to deal with issue. The U.S. was represented by Steve Morris and Jonathan Putnam from the National Park Service at the Department of the Interior. David Ostroff accompanied them from the U.S. Mission staff. End Summary.

#### Budget Issues - Far from Decided

¶2. (U) The budget meeting was chaired by Ambassador Maria San Segundo, (Spain) in her capacity as chairman of the WH Committee. She indicated that the meeting was a follow-up to discussions of the lunchtime, informal working group on the budget held during the last Committee meeting in Quebec. The WH Center's Director, Francesco Bandarin, attempted to channel discussions unsuccessfully on issues like exchange rate problems. After participants complained about a lack of sufficient information as well as a lack of broader vision, many suggested that the meeting be delayed until the "Future of the WH Convention" meeting later in the week had been held.

¶3. (U) Mr. Bandarin's overview of the WH Center's budget left some with the impression that things were intentionally kept a bit vague. Bandarin said that there has been a 33 percent decrease in the budget from 2002-2003 biennium, dropping from \$10 million to \$7.2 million. (He indicated that the decrease was due to spending down the reserves following a decision by the Committee to that effect.) He noted that the fixed contributions of the WH Fund, made up of one percent of each Member State's contribution to UNESCO, remain stable at \$6.5 million per biennium.

¶4. (U) Bandarin said that the WH Fund counts on an additional \$400,000 to \$600,000 per biennium in income from earmarked extra budgetary funds, accrued interest, and royalties from the use of the WH logo. He also mentioned that he would like to increase "contingency reserves" from \$700,000 to \$1 million to help gap cash flow problems at the beginning of each cycle, which has obliged the Advisory Bodies to advance their own funds for up to seven months at the start of each budget cycle. He also asked to shift the contracts for the Advisory Bodies from August to July of each year to help ease the problems related to UNESCO cash flows. Bandarin also noted a decrease in funding due to the U.S. dollar/Euro exchange rate fluctuation though the immediacy of the problem had diminished in recent months with the growing strength of the dollar.

¶5. (U) Australia noted that the States Parties hadn't addressed the issue of static resources and the increasing number of properties on the WH List. Bahrain said that there is a "lack of commitment" by States Parties to fund the WH Center's work properly. Several States Parties complained about the lack of transparency, and said that it was necessary for the WH Committee to be well-briefed. Bandarin said that many of the budget concerns are linked to the "big questions" that would be dealt with during the "Future of the

WH Convention" meeting held the next day. Others questioned the relatively small percentage of its budget that UNESCO gives to the WH Center, asking why its flagship program does not receive more funding.

¶16. (U) Other ideas were raised, including charging according to a sliding scale based on the number of sites per country, or a fixed percentage per site. Israel gave the example of Ethiopia, which has eight sites, and pays only \$92 per year to the WH Fund. It was suggested that an additional 10 percent would not be stressful to the poorest countries, but could add up to real money for more developed nations. Bandarin noted that the WH Committee had previously rejected such proposals or the idea of a \$300 minimum contribution. Bandarin noted that over one half of the WH Center's staff is paid through extra budgetary funding, and suggested that one possible solution to the growing workload would be to decentralize the work to other parts of the world.

¶17. (U) Another solution suggested was to develop regional WH funds, like the Africa Fund, which has already been created and has received several million dollars in donations. Chairman San Segundo mentioned that a similar regional fund is being planned for Asia (ASPAC), adding that it is up to us to be sure that all monies are used efficiently.

¶18. (U) The U.S. delegation, among others, complained that we don't yet have a clear idea about where we are going, and lack necessary preparation for this discussion. The U.S. said it would be interested in seeking an increase from the UNESCO regular budget for the WH Center. Morocco, in turn, said that it would be problematic to reduce funds available for other UNESCO programs. Israel noted that we shouldn't be in the position of muddling through every year, dependent on extra budgetary funds, and that we should be investigating how to increase our basic budget.

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¶19. (U) Australia summed up the concerns well, saying that this is a multi-faceted problem that requires multi-faceted solutions. In order to move forward, we need to know what things cost. It's not only a question of deciding how to cut up the pie, but needing to make the pie bigger. Bandarin said that he would make an effort to get more information to the working group, but that the deadlines would make it difficult to present more information in the short timeframe before the next round of meetings. Chairman San Segundo decided that the best way to move forward was to create a working group, and suggested that, like the working group regarding use of the WH emblem, the budget working group could meet again in mid-May in conjunction with the next information and preparatory meeting for the Seville WH Committee meeting. ENGELKEN